

CLARKSVILLE WEEKLY CHRONICLE.

R. H. YANCEY, Editor.

A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

Mr. Townsend, of Illinois, having read a recent editorial in the CHRONICLE advocating the abolition of the electoral college, and the election of the President by a direct vote of the people, was impressed with the soundness of the doctrine, and has proposed a constitutional amendment to that effect in the House.

We are not advised as to whether or not Mr. Townsend's measure provides for the lengthening of the Presidential term, with ineligibility for more than one term, as the CHRONICLE proposed, but if it does, we are prepared to give it our unqualified endorsement.

The electoral college has never served the purpose for which it was created since the election of the elder Adams. It was supposed by the framers of the constitution that it would prevent the excitement and turmoil incident to a Presidential election by taking the choice of a chief magistrate out of the hands of the people. In this it has proven a conspicuous failure. The republican spirit is so rife in the people of this land of liberty that they claimed the right the constitution denied them in this particular, and by a custom, now long established, annulled this provision.

The only feature of the original electoral college now preserved is that the vote is counted by States, and the arguments that may be urged for a continuance of this practice are founded more in sentiment than sense. The plan is apt at any time to work great mischief by throwing the decision of some heated contest, in which the whole nation has been stirred to its centre, on some close State in which the political parties are evenly divided. This was the case in the last Presidential election, where everything turned on the pivotal State of New York.

One of the principal reasons that induced our wise forefathers to remove the election of the President directly from the people, was that it would be impossible for all the people of the nation to ever become acquainted with the candidates. There were only 3,000,000 people in the United States at that time, and under the conditions that then existed, there was force in the argument. But the wise men of that day and generation didn't dream of the railroads, telegraphs and daily newspapers that would render such an argument ridiculous when the population of the country had increased to 55,000,000.

The electoral college is a fact fossil. The men who compose it are mere machines, so long as they act honestly, and there is where the danger lies. The will of the people can at any time be defeated by some elector who chooses to exercise the right the law gives him of voting as he pleases, and contrary to the way he was expected to vote.

ABOUT SOCIETY.

The New York World, in deploring a temporary vacuum "in what is conventionally termed society," facetiously says, "Those who are thrown upon their own mental resources, and have no resources to be thrown upon, have a hard time making themselves endured." These kind of flings are quite common, and they are always popular because the outside world has a grudge at society on account of its exclusiveness. But they are frequently unjust; excepting a very small intellectual class, it might be said of the whole world, that it would have a hard time if thrown on its mental resources. It is not only the upper circle, upper because wealth and the refinement that wealth brings exalts it, and which is "conventionally termed society," that feels the want of active amusement. All the world needs such a stimulant, and those who can depend on inward resources to drive off ennui, or a fit of "the blues," are few and far between.

There is a wonderful sameness in human nature, and difference in social position does not really develop its different phases. The same traits of mind and character are repeated under different conditions and appear unlike as

"One whose girth is hidden-gray" would appear unlike himself if he should don the habiliments of a fashionable man of the world.

The society people are probably more dependent on amusement than others, because they are less employed with the sterner duties of life, but, as a class, they are no more devoid of "mental resources" and therefore such flings as that we quote from the World are not altogether deserved. If there are fools and frivolous idiots to be found among the people whose wealth and refinement have given them a preferred position, it is also true that they have no monopoly of such qualities.

But we provincial people of the country and small towns who enjoy, to a great extent, a pure Democracy, must leave these problems to the great cities where society flourishes.

MR. MILLER'S POLITICS.

The following card appeared in the last issue of the Democrat:

The CHRONICLE in a late issue of its Daily says that it had information that one of the proprietors of the Democrat was a life long Republican. As I am the party referred to, I will state for the information of anyone who may take the slightest interest in the matter, that I never voted a Republican ticket in my life or scratched a Democratic one.

Respectfully, J. N. B. MILLER.

The CHRONICLE is glad to give Mr. Miller the benefit of his denial in this regard, and it now becomes necessary that we state where we obtained information concerning his politics before he became a proprietor of "the only Democratic paper published in Clarksville."

Mr. Miller was employed in the Tobacco Leaf office during the last Presidential campaign, and Messrs. Brandon & Barkdale of that paper both say that during the entire time he was openly and avowedly for Blaine, and made no disguise of his Republicanism.

Mr. Elmer Green, deputy postmaster, who is himself a Republican, as everybody knows, says Mr. Miller is a Republican, and was strong for Blaine.

Furthermore, we are informed that Mr. Miller held an appointment under a Republican administration a few years ago, in the railroad postal service. As Republican appointments were mostly made under the spoils system, we supposed Mr. Miller must have rendered some party service in order to have secured this appointment.

Mr. Miller certainly has a right to espouse whatever political creed he pleases, and his party attachments are, of course, nothing against him in a social or business way, but we do challenge the right of a Republican to conduct "the only Democratic paper published in the county."

If Mr. Miller is such a Simon Pure Democrat that he never even scratched a ticket, why did he misrepresent himself as we have stated above, and how did he secure that Government appointment? In order to make the matter perfectly clear, we would like for him to explain more fully.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

The CHRONICLE proposed to work in harmony with the Nashville American for an old time 40,000 Democratic majority in the coming State election, and thereupon the Bolivar Bulletin arises to ask us a question it learned from ex-Boss Vertrees, whose dictations it assiduously followed. Says the Bulletin:

Do you mean Brother Yancey, that you are willing to submit all questions to the next Democratic State Convention, and abide its action in good faith. If so, it delights us beyond measure to hear you say so.

This was eminently Mr. Vertrees' idea, and coming from him it always bore the understanding that he was to control the convention.

But there is no use whipping the Devil around the stump. It is always our manner to discard subterfuges and come directly to the point. If the Bulletin could have brought itself to throw away the formula provided by Mr. Vertrees and have asked exactly what it intended to ask, it would put the question to us direct, after this fashion: Will you advocate a Tennessee Railroad Commission if the next Democratic convention declares in favor of such an institution?

To this question we respond emphatically no, and if that be treason, the Bulletin can make the most of it. But we do say this, it is our intention to earnestly support the ticket nominated by the next Democratic convention, whether the commission plank be incorporated into the platform or not.

Now in turn, we want to ask the Bulletin a question that is equally as fair as the one it intended to ask us and which was couched in the extract made from the Vertrees Form Book: If the next Democratic convention should incorporate an Anti-Prohibition plank in the platform it adopts, will the Bulletin support it?

It is just as fair to make one of these questions a party measure as it is the other. In fact, Anti-Prohibition has been made a Democratic doctrine, so called, in some of the States in the Union, whereas such a thing was never attempted with the Railroad Commission question except in Tennessee. Furthermore, while in a catechetic mood, we would like to ask the Bulletin if it should feel called on to go against this Anti-Prohibition plank, would it as a matter of necessity, feel called on to renounce the Democratic faith and "get on the other side to be shot at?"

We don't believe these outside matters should be put in the party platform, but if they are, they shouldn't deter us from supporting the party ticket. Will the Bulletin shake hands on that?

The Banner's Washington special says that Mr. C. E. Merrill's connection with the American will cease and Mr. Wade will take his place as correspondent of the paper at the national capital.

That most excellent and highly conservative journal, the Memphis Appeal, comes to us this morning in quarto shape, having at last discarded its ancient blanket sheet form.

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JUDGE H. H. LURTON.

Judge Horace H. Lurton of this city, has been favorably spoken of by quite a number of Tennessee newspapers, as fit material for a Supreme Judge and he has also been solicited by numbers of influential men, representing both the bar and the people, to become a candidate for such a position.

He authorizes the CHRONICLE to say that having duly considered the matter, he will be a candidate for Supreme Judge before the Democratic convention.

Judge Lurton is possessed of fine legal acumen and splendid acquirements and his ability to fill the place cannot be questioned. He is an energetic young man with an immense working capacity and is therefore the kind of timber most needed on the Tennessee Supreme bench. He held the position of Chancellor in this division, when barely old enough to be eligible to the office, and while making a reputation for the soundness of his decisions, dispatched the business of his court with extraordinary rapidity.

He is in every way qualified for a Supreme Judgeship and we hope, both for his own sake and that of the State, that he will obtain it.

THE Democrat dodges the point we made on the railroad question and rehashes a lot of its old talk on the subject. How about that application for a pass?

MORE ABOUT THE SAME THING.

At the risk of boring our readers with a badly-worn topic, it sometimes becomes necessary that we write on the subject of a railroad commission.

It is fair to presume that most everybody who takes any interest in the matter knows that the CHRONICLE don't favor the establishment of a railroad commission in Tennessee. We have taken occasion several times to state the fact and must still sometimes repeat it for the benefit of those who haven't yet "caught on."

Some people may also be cognizant of the fact that we have a dear contemporary down the street that does favor a railroad commission, favors it strong, and don't seem to live for much else, except to "cuss" the railroads and advocate a commission.

Where two papers of such diametrically opposite views are published in the same town, it is natural that they should sometimes fall into controversy on the subject, and the public has probably noticed a tendency that way between us and our dear neighbor.

It might be natural, too, that in the course of time each paper would have presented its case so often that all the arguments on either side would have become flat, stale and unprofitable. But this is not true with us and our dear contemporary. Our productive powers are too great—we have an infinitude of resource on the railroad question. We are now going to present an entirely new argument on this subject, and we hope no one will do us the injustice to say they have heard it before.

Railroads should be regulated by very strict laws, preventing discriminations, extortion and every species of wrong doing. The only way ever devised to enforce any law is through the courts. We have a sufficiency of courts in Tennessee and a railroad commission would be an unnecessary tribunal. The law creating the Savage commission provided that its decision should be *prima facie* evidence against the railroads for use in court. How would any decision be arrived at without some form of trial, and who ever heard of a trial without attorney's fees and costs. And when such decision is rendered it was only *prima facie* evidence to be used in a court where the suit might have been begun.

The argument then, that our dear contemporary has been known to use to the effect that a person wronged by a railroad can't sometimes bring suit because the amount involved would not justify the expense, falls to the ground. The duty of the railroad commission would be to decide between him and the road, and it couldn't therefore act as his attorney, or pay his cost.

There has never been any way devised since the world began by which a government could right wrongs or decide a dispute between its subjects except

through its courts. There may be just complaint at the law's delay, but a railroad commission couldn't remedy that defect.

A railroad commission in Tennessee with the arbitrary power to fix rates, would be illegal and highly injurious to the State. One to punish wrongs and decide disputes could act only through the courts and the citizen could do that without the aid of the commission.

We have no ground for apprehension that Tennessee juries and grand juries will not give the railroads all the punishment they deserve whenever they get a shake at them.

THE recent wreck on the I. A. & T. railroad, which was quite a small affair after all, should not lead to the belief that it was caused by a defect in the road, and that such things are apt to occur often. If there is a road in the South that is well built and well equipped, it is the Illinois Central, yet yesterday a special to the Nashville Banner conveyed the following intelligence:

No. 3 passenger train, on the Illinois Central Railroad, met with a serious accident at Tallahatchie River, twelve miles south of Holly Springs, Miss., at 6 o'clock yesterday evening. The entire train, except the sleepers, was derailed. Engineer William Ruffin was killed. None of the passengers were seriously hurt. The accident was caused by a missing rail which had been maliciously removed. Trains will be delayed ten hours.

CONCERNING the circulation dispute between the CHRONICLE and the Democrat, we have nothing further to say except that we made no special reference to single wrappers. The packages of which we spoke that don't go through the mails, are sent out within a radius of twenty miles of Clarksville. Our subscription books and mailing lists are still open to public inspection.

WE have seen it several times stated that Congressman Caldwell was the author of the bill introduced into the House to appropriate the proceeds of public lands in aid of education, and the statement was confirmed by an interview with Mr. Caldwell himself published in the Washington correspondence of a Nashville paper. Yet we find the following in a Washington special to the Cincinnati Times-Star: "Something was said in this correspondence a few days ago about a bill appropriating the proceeds of the sale of public lands to school purposes. By inadvertence it was mentioned as Mr. Caldwell's bill, when in fact it should have been accredited to Mr. J. D. Taylor, of Tennessee, who originated and presented it in the House. It seems to be attracting a good deal of attention, and a prominent influential Senator said to our correspondent a day or two ago, that he intended to introduce it in the Senate and urge it against the Blair bill."

THE Courier-Journal Washington correspondent repeats the story of Senator Harris having brought the Tennessee school money safe home after carrying it with him to Mexico, after the war. It has always been put down to the credit of the Senator that he did this thing, but the story is quite a chestnut in this part of the country.

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